

good, worthwhile reading. The last two chapters, on badger communication and conclusions, are however sometimes disappointing, and inappropriate. This book is a useful summary of its author's research and will be of interest to anyone with a serious interest in badgers.

D. P. SLEEMAN

B. NELSON. *The gannet*. Pp 24; illustrated. ISBN 0-7478-0018-9.

E. SIMMS. *The song thrush*. Pp 24; illustrated. ISBN 0-7478-0023-5.

E. GARCIA. *The blackcap and the garden warbler*. Pp 24; illustrated. ISBN 0-7478-0025-1. Shire Publications, Aylesbury: 1989. Price £1.95 each

These titles are part of the handy and useful Shire Natural History series. No.1, *Gorse*, appeared in 1985, complete with the illustration of Linnaeus on Putney Heath, and other good things by way of text and illustration.

The booklets, although only 24 pages in length, are written in each case by an expert or experts, and well illustrated and printed. Brief, but adequate, notes on further reading are appended. Even at the increased 1989 price copies are good value for money. The publishers claim "to fill the gap between brief guides of general interest and full-length books for the specialist" seems to me to be fully justified.

Dr Bryan Nelson has written an informative condensed monograph on the gannet, as befits the author of the 1978 definitive text on the species. Here is up-to-date information about the colonies, and recent study of seasonal movements as well as the dangers of marine pollution. The colour photographs, taken by the author, are spectacular.

In *The Song thrush*, Eric Simms, another expert in a special field of study, outlines a picture of this familiar but perhaps declining species, which faces competition from the equally well known blackbird. Here again, the colour plates are very good and true to life, especially the picture of the nest and eggs. The mistle thrush stands out well in front of the mysterious background of uniform green (plate 5)—fashionable even if unexplained! The nesting site among the metal pipes (plate 19) is fascinating. I was relieved to find the diagrams most useful and comprehensible.

The blackcap and the garden warbler are the subjects of Dr Ernest Garcia's precis of his valuable research, illuminated no doubt by his familiarity with the Mediterranean and North African migration routes. The author explains the linking of the two species in one study: "Blackcaps and Garden warblers . . . interact strongly where they meet, so much so that an account of the ecology of one species really needs to take considerable notice of that of the other." This booklet is a must for all warbler enthusiasts and perhaps for reformed 'Twitchers' seeking useful employment.

J. DAGGER

L. GODSALL BOTTRIELL. *King cheetah. The story of the quest*. E. J. Brill, Leiden: 1987. Pp 241; illustrated. Price: Hfl 149.95, £16.95. ISBN 90-04-08588-2.

R. P. MACKAL. *A living dinosaur? In search of Mokele-Mbembe*. E. J. Brill, Leiden: 1987. Pp xviii, 340; illustrated. Price: Hfl 149.75, £16.95. ISBN 90-04-08543-2.

Western zoology was for a couple of centuries merely a quest for new animal species. In the wake of explorers, naturalists scoured newly "discovered" lands collecting reports, skins and even live specimens. Now that we—or at least a couple of Americans—have been to the moon and Voyager to the outskirts of our solar system, we might expect *all* animal species worth discovering on earth to be registered and represented in museums if not in zoos.

Perhaps not? One of the oldest, most respected scientific publishers has issued two new expedition reports out of Africa on "hidden" animals, to date undescribed by, and controversial to, science. It is only appropriate that the forewords to both books were written by Bernard Heuvelmans, the prolific writer and zoologist who coined the term we now use to describe the continued search for new animal species: cryptozoology.

The history of natural history is of overwhelming importance to cryptozoologists, who, by definition, do not just stumble over a new species while out on a picnic; they look for new species with the aspiration of scientific support, setting themselves scientific standards. The history of natural history provides the leads they need for their search.

Take Mackal "in search of Mokele-Mbembe". To expect a scientifically well-informed reader to believe that dinosaurs still exist is to ask a lot. Yet Dr Mackal, biologist and biochemist, had over 200 years of serious reports by naturalists to back his claim and help prepare his quest for a living dinosaur in central Africa. After two expeditions Mackal still has no dinosaur to prove his case, but his field—or swamp—report, the circumstantial evidence he had accumulated and his synthesis of past and current knowledge of the local fauna, past and present, lead him to expect not only one but at least three new species of "hidden" animals in the River Congo basin.

Lena Bottriell has an easier case: the king cheetah is there in a South African game park for all to see; stuffed specimens stand in a few museums; photographs of the big striped cat were published long ago.

So what is so "crypto" about the king cheetah? What is it? A particularly large, unusually marked, nocturnal species of cheetah? A subspecies? A freak?

Mrs Bottriell's story is the story of an animal in the making. "Discovered" over 60 years ago and described as a new species by the curator of mammals in the British Museum (Natural History) in 1927, the identification was later withdrawn, the stuffed specimens banished (in shame) to the cellars and the king cheetah largely forgotten.

Mrs Bottriell mounted a systematic search for all skins and skulls, and the first field expedition to look for a population. The quest was successful.

Brill is to be commended for publishing two well-bound and -printed books, replete with illustrations, on a topic, cryptozoology, that does not lend itself to immediate recognition in the scientific rounds. Historians of natural history will find in Mackal's and Bottriell's books not only useful references to the history of zoology, but a good read as well.

H. REICHENBACH

P. J. P. WHITEHEAD and M. BOESEMAN. *A portrait of Dutch 17th century Brazil. Animals, plants and people by the artists of Johan Maurits of Nassau*. North-Holland Publishing Company, Amsterdam: 1989. Pp 359; illustrated. Price: Hfl 125, US\$65.75. ISBN 0-444-58632-3.

The brief Dutch colonial presence in northeastern Brazil (1630-54) was punctuated by the seven-year tenure of a remarkable Governor, Johan Maurits, who engaged scientists and artists to document the natural history and culture of the country. After returning to Europe in 1644, Maurits underwrote the *Historia naturalis Brasiliae* (1648), a work written by Georg Marcgraf and Willem Piso from their Brazilian experience and illustrated by woodcuts taken from original painting and drawings by various artists, including Albert Eckhout and Frans Post. The *Historia* remained nearly the sole source of the natural history of Brazilian plants and animals for 150 years (Linnaeus drew on it a century later for new species for his *Systema Naturae*), and it and the original images were sources for many artists into the eighteenth century. Most of the originals went to Berlin in 1652, disappeared after the Second World War and resurfaced dramatically in Cracow in 1977.

The authors of this well-produced book justify their addition to the scholarly industry of Mauritian Brazil on two grounds: the plants and animals in the original drawings and paintings have never been carefully identified, and the secondary uses of those images have not been carefully traced. They make a good start on both aims, giving a useful introduction to Dutch Brazil, descriptions of the *Historia* and of original and secondary seventeenth century sources (including the Marcgraf wall map of Dutch Brazil), sketches of the lives and work of the artists, a perspective on the Mauritian contribution to natural history in relation to earlier work, and 101 plates (80 in color) exemplifying all sources. The text is amply cross-referenced in the margins, and one can easily move among text, plates and bibliography. Some of the original paintings are startlingly life-like, among them a Tapuya by Eckhout ("the first real portrait of an Amerindian by a professional European artist"), and a hawk eagle by an unidentified artist.

Although of more use to the art historian than to the naturalist, this book will be of interest to anyone curious about the rich artistic and scientific legacy of Dutch Brazil.

DAVID A. WEST

K. CROTZ (compiler). *Ewaniana: the writing of Joe and Nesta Ewan*. (American Horticultural Series No. 2). The American Botanist, Booksellers, 1103 West Truitt Avenue, Chillicothe, Illinois: 1989. Pp [64]; frontispiece. Price: US\$25. ISBN 0-929332-01-6.

It is rare to find a personal bibliography covering so diverse a range of natural history subjects in a fascinatingly wide range of sources, but then this covers the 62 years to 1989 of the output of Joe and Nesta Ewan. To them the pursuit of knowledge is vital, leading into spellbinding highways and byways with a supreme degree of erudition.

Ewaniana began as a mimeographed list for Prof. Ewan's students at Tulane University, finally covering 1928-78, and has been updated from the time of his retirement together with a few additions for earlier years. The errata slip is too modest—there are many more than five!—and it is a pity that the Ewans' scholarship could not be better served by a more detailed and accurate index. The typography is sometimes untidy but the paper and binding are good. Despite these drawbacks this remains a very useful portrait of the Ewans' continuing interests especially with the people and places of biology and natural history.

JOHN FLANAGAN

A. S. KERKHAM (compiler). *South African botanical literature 1600-1988*. (South African Library Grey Bibliography 16). South African Library, Cape Town: 1988. Pp 256; illustrated. Price: R35, US\$35, £17.50. ISBN 0-86968-083-8.

Eight hundred and eighteen items ranging from books to periodicals are listed in this paperbound bibliography which, it is recommended, should be cited by the acronym *SABLIT*: horticultural works and texts treating plant anatomy and physiology have been excluded as have theses, journal articles, general